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October 14 – Presidential [Scholars](#) nominees due

Notes from Commissioner Wagner

1. Governor Raimondo announces strategic goals for 3rd-grade reading

On Wednesday, Governor Raimondo held a news conference at the Francis J. Varieur Elementary School, in Pawtucket, to announce her strategic goals for 3rd-grade reading. Her announcement said in part:

Citing a series of initiatives and programs focused on helping children develop the skills they need to succeed during the first eight years of life, Governor Raimondo committed Rhode Island to achieving an ambitious goal today to ensure that three out of four third graders score proficient or higher in reading by 2025, the year most children born this year will complete third grade.

“When I see that just over a third of our third graders are reading on grade level, I'm disappointed, frustrated and I'm impatient. Study after study shows that the number one indicator of high school graduation and future success is a child's ability to read on grade level by third grade," said Governor Raimondo. “Today, I'm drawing a line in the sand and setting a clear goal for Rhode Island: By 2025, when the kids who were born this year reach third grade, three out of four will be reading at grade level.”

According to the Rhode Island Kids Count 2016 [Factbook](#), reading proficiently by the end of third grade is a crucial marker in a child's educational development and is a leading indicator of high school graduation. Students who do not read at grade level are four times more likely to drop out of high school before earning a degree than those who do. In 2015, 37 percent of Rhode Island third graders scored proficient or higher on the PARCC English language arts assessment, which is slightly higher than the national average of 35 percent.

Progress on the third-grade reading strategic goal and success of the initiatives which support the goal will be tracked regularly by the Governor's Performance Management team. In addition to this goal, Governor Raimondo will unveil strategic goals later this month related to secondary and higher education.

"The difference between a dream and a goal is a deadline. Today, we're setting a clear, bold goal. And we'll set more in the weeks ahead," Raimondo said. "I recognize that this is different from the way government in this state has typically worked. We're going to hold ourselves - and our colleagues - accountable. Achieving this goal and the other goals we set will require teamwork and partnership across government and with other community organizations."

If we are to ensure that all students read at grade level by the end of 3rd grade, we need to start early, partner with families and communities, and provide comprehensive and coordinated supports, including high-quality early learning programs. Reading starts in the family, continues in the community, and establishes itself as a lifetime skill in the school. Governor Raimondo's goal is ambitious, but great things follow high expectations - for ourselves and our children.

Thanks to Pawtucket Superintendent Patti DiCenso and Varieur Principal Mary Murray for welcoming Governor Raimondo to Pawtucket for this important announcement.

2. District, school leaders invited to meeting on mini-grants to support development, growth of education leaders

RIDE and the Rhode Island Principals Association announce a joint Network Meeting on Mini-Grant Opportunities for Rhode Island education leaders. District-level administrators, building-level administrators, and teacher leaders are welcome and encouraged to attend the meeting on **September 26**, from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m., at the Shriners Imperial Room, 1 Rhodes Place, Cranston.

Funding is now available to support the continued development and growth of education leaders in Rhode Island. An introduction to the mini-grant program along with representatives from vendors and partner organizations will be part of the agenda for the meeting.

Alexis Meyer has recently been appointed Leadership Fellow at RIDE to help facilitate the work around expanded leadership and building leadership capacity in Rhode Island. Please select this [LINK](#) for more detailed information. You can email Alexis Meyer (alexis.meyer@ride.ri.gov) should you need further information about this leadership-development opportunity.

3. Barrington district receives “exemplar status” from national organization committed to innovation

Congratulations to the Barrington School District, which received Exemplar District Status from the Partnership for 21st Century Learning (p21.org). Barrington is one of only a dozen school districts from across the country to earn this distinction. The organization recognizes and honors school districts for their commitment to innovation.

4. *Reminder:* All are invited to celebration of educator excellence at September 24 WaterFire

This year RIDE will honor Rhode Island educators for their outstanding service and dedication to the education profession and to Rhode Island

students at “WaterFire: A Salute to Rhode Island Educators.” This event will be held on Saturday, **September 24**, from 4 to 7:30 p.m., in downtown Providence, at Memorial Park.

All are welcome to attend the celebration to support our Rhode Island educators. This family-oriented event will include an awards ceremony and a procession featuring the honored educators, culminating with a “Ring of Fire” at the basin in downtown Providence.

If you have questions about this event, please email Lisa Foehr, at lisa.foehr@ride.ri.gov.

5. *Reminder*: School leaders urged to encourage 10th-grade student participation in PSATs; deadline is one week away!

The deadline for ordering PSAT booklets for your grade-10 students is just one week away.

As you prepare your grade-10 students to take advantage of the opportunity to take the PSAT test for free in October, please note that College Board has reported to us that “students in the class of 2015 who took the PSAT/NMSQT before taking the SAT *had a higher combined score of 134 points, on average, than students who did not take the PSAT/NMSQT.*”

Please see this message from the College Board:

On October 19, districts across Rhode Island can administer the PSAT/NMSQT® to their 10th-grade students during the school day, at no cost. Like the SAT®, which will be administered to all Rhode Island 11th-graders in the spring of 2017, the PSAT/NMSQT focuses on what students are already learning in classrooms across the state and measures the skills and knowledge that

current research shows are essential for success in college and career.

Taking the PSAT/NMSQT provides students with a great opportunity to practice for and preview the SAT. The test also provides more information than ever before about students' academic strength and areas to target for improvement. Educators can use the results to inform their instructional planning and accelerate students who are either ahead or behind.

Through the College Board partnership with Khan Academy®, students preparing for the PSAT/NMSQT or SAT can take advantage of free, interactive practice tools at satpractice.org. By setting up and linking their College Board and Khan Academy accounts, students receive personalized practice recommendations based on their own test results.

Taking the PSAT/NMSQT also links students to other benefits, including access to advanced coursework and millions of dollars in scholarships.

Schools and districts should place PSAT/NMSQT orders on the College Board's ordering website: collegeboard.org/school. The easy-to-use tool walks users through a streamlined ordering process and provides up-to-date statuses for all orders on a single dashboard.

Please [submit your orders](#) for PSAT test booklets by **September 23**.

If you have any questions about the PSAT or SAT administration, please send them to Dr. Kevon Tucker-Seeley (kevon.tucker-seeley@ride.ri.gov).

6. **Reminder: RIDE announces next steps toward formation of Empowerment Schools**

The 2016 General Assembly enacted the [School and Family Empowerment Act](#), rooted in the belief that if we are going to help all of our children reach their full potential, it will be because we empower the educators closest to students. The Empowerment Act provides educators and community leaders the voluntary opportunity to reimagine and implement their vision for an excellent school by taking advantage of unprecedented levels of school-based autonomy and regulatory flexibility.

Later this fall, RIDE will release detailed information on the process and next steps regarding how districts and educators can volunteer to have their schools become empowerment schools.

Interested in leading an empowerment school? Have a vision for an empowerment school that will provide an excellent, innovative education to Rhode Island students? Please let us know through [this link](#).

We will follow up with you shortly to learn more about your vision and to share opportunities to participate in communities of practice with like-minded leaders. In addition, later this fall we will release information about opportunities for interested educators to both participate in leadership-development experiences and connect with like-minded innovative educators interested in developing and leading an empowerment school.

From RIDE

Assessments:

7. LEAs to receive confidential 2016 NECAP Science results for internal review on Monday (September 19)

On Monday (September 19), we will provide you with confidential access to the 2016 NECAP Science results for your LEA, for your review for accuracy. Our plan is to publish our NECAP Science Results report on September 27 and to issue a news release about these results at that time. Please keep your LEA results confidential until September 27.

Here is the timeline:

Monday (September 19) at 9 a.m.: Schools and districts will be able to access a password-protected site to download all reports, including School and District Results Reports, District Summary Reports, Item Analysis Reports for science, Released Items and Support Materials documents, as well as the *Guide to Using the 2016 NECAP Science Reports*. All school and district reports refer to Testing Year, which means data presented are for each student and the school at which she or he took the test during the May 2016 administration of the NECAP Science test. You will be able to download student-level data files that contain demographics, scores, student-questionnaire results, and student performance on the released items. Two hard copies of the Student Reports will be shipped to schools on September 27. The color copy is for parents or guardians, and the black-and-white copy is for school records.

Please note that *all* summative results are embargoed from public release until **September 27** at 10 a.m.

Tuesday, **September 27**, at 10 a.m.: Schools and districts will no longer be required to provide a password to have access to the nonconfidential results. The general public will have access to all nonconfidential NECAP Science results via a link on the RIDE website: www.ride.ri.gov/NECAP-results. Nonconfidential results are those that do not contain any student-level information. Those reports

include the School, District, and State Results Reports and Summary Reports. The public will also have access to the Released Items and Support Materials documents, the *Guide to Using the 2016 NECAP Science Reports*, and the NECAP Science results report and public data set.

8. RIDE schedules PD workshops on administration of ACCESS for ELs assessment

This school year's ACCESS for English Learners state English-proficiency assessment will take place during the testing window of January 1 through February 17, 2017. (For a complete calendar of ACCESS dates, please see [the RI page of the WIDA website.](#))

During the previous school year, some LEAs transitioned to online testing while others elected to continue paper-based testing. Since all PARCC testing will be completed online this year, even more LEAs are expected to select computer-based ACCESS testing as well. In order to help prepare you for the responsibilities associated with ACCESS testing, the following three sessions of ACCESS Planning PD will be offered:

- Wednesday, September 28, from 3 – 5 p.m., at the Northern Rhode Island Collaborative, in Lincoln
- Wednesday, October 5, from 3 – 5 p.m., at East Bay Collaborative, in Warren
- Wednesday, October 12, from 3 - 5 p.m., at New England Institute of Technology, in East Greenwich

Please ensure that Test Coordinators and Technology Coordinators from your LEA plan to attend one of these sessions to help prepare for ACCESS testing. As a model district, Providence has an EL Program Office that worked closely with the Office of Assessment and Student

Performance to facilitate ACCESS online testing last year, and representatives from both offices, Roland Sasseville and Krystafer Redden, will be presenting what they have learned about collaborating to make the assessment run smoothly for students. You can register to attend these sessions on the [eRIDE Professional Development calendar](#).

Legal:

9. Commissioner issues ruling on in-school suspension

Please see this recent Commissioner’s Decision:

Student who received a one-day, in-school suspension for “instigating a fight” by spraying silly string at another student received an appropriate consequence for her actions under the district’s Standards for Student Behavior

<http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2016/020-16 M. Doe v Chariho S. C. 08152016.pdf>

10. *Reminder: LEAs asked to submit certification regarding Constitutionally Protected Prayer by October 3 – Action Item*

Each year, we must submit to the U.S. Department of Education a list of any LEAs that have not certified to us their compliance with the Guidance on Constitutionally Protected Prayer in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, which you can find here:

http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/religionandschools/prayer_guidance.html

This guidance provides information on current law concerning constitutionally protected prayer in public schools.

As you know, no policy or practice in this state in any way interferes with the constitutionally protected rights of schoolchildren.

Once you have read the guidance, it is required by law that you certify to RIDE annually in writing that no policy in your LEA prevents or otherwise denies participation in constitutionally protected prayer in your schools.

Please send your certification via email to Elliot Krieger, in the Office of the Commissioner, at elliot.krieger@ride.ri.gov, using the subject line "School Prayer."

Please submit your certification by Monday, **October 3**.

You may copy this language and use it to make your certification:

**Certification of Compliance with the
Law on Constitutionally Protected Prayer**

This is to certify that no policy of my LEA prevents or otherwise denies participation in constitutionally protected prayer in public elementary and secondary schools as set forth in the "Guidance on Constitutionally Protected Prayer in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools," issued February 7, 2003. This assurance applies to the school year 2016-17.

Name:

Name of LEA:

Please feel free to contact Elliot if you have any questions on this matter.

Data Collection:

11. LEAs reminded to update, submit enrollment, teacher-course-student data files

The October snapshot is quickly approaching, and 81 percent of districts have duplicate records that need to be cleaned up prior to this snapshot. The resolution of duplicate student-enrollment records requires cross-district collaboration, which requires adequate time prior to the submission deadline, especially for those 10 districts that have more than 50 duplicate records.

The Enrollment Census has been open since the beginning of the school year, and we currently have 86 percent of districts that have submitted enrollment data. Enrollment data should be submitted nightly and should be an accurate reflection of your student population. If there are errors or omissions on the enrollment file, you can perform and update during the day or during the nightly data-transfer process.

The Teacher, Course, Student (TCS) data collection is currently open, and we have less than stellar submission numbers for these four files. The Course file has a 59-percent submission rate, the Section file is at 44 percent, the Staff file at 36 percent, and the Student file is at 31 percent. Similar to the enrollment file, this is a nightly upload and, as the assignments change, a new file will update those records. It is crucial that all four of these files be imported nightly. You do not need to wait until the student's schedule is finalized to submit files.

If you have any questions about any of the mentioned data collections, please submit a help-desk ticket, at <https://support.ride.ri.gov>.

12. Data-manager training scheduled for September 19

On September 19, RIDE will hold eRIDE and RIDEmap training for data managers. The training will take place at the RIDE office at 9 a.m.

If you would like to attend this training, please contact Mario Goncalves, at 222-8968 or mario.goncalves@ride.ri.gov.

13. Data-collection calendar updated

The [Data Collection Calendar](#) contains all of the open and due dates for data collections and report submissions. These dates may change as the school year progresses, in response to updates by external entities. Please review the calendar on a regular basis in order to remain compliant with data submissions.

If you have any questions about the Data Collections Calendar, please submit a help-desk ticket, at <https://support.ride.ri.gov>

14. *Reminder:* LEAs asked to keep School Profile data up to date

The School Profile module within eRIDE is used to collect detailed information on districts and schools. It is important that this information is kept up to date throughout the year, as the Assessment, Communications, the Master Directory and other systems rely on these data. If you have any questions about the school profile or master directory, please submit a help-desk ticket, at <https://support.ride.ri.gov>.

15. *Reminder:* Enrollment Census updated to account for students attending state-funded pre-kindergarten

We have added an additional enrollment type to the enrollment census: You should use the “E” value for students in a state-funded preschool classroom. You should use this code only for those students

enrolled in a state-funded pre-kindergarten classroom that was funded by a Preschool Expansion grant.

If you have any questions about this new enrollment type, please submit a help-desk ticket, at <https://support.ride.ri.gov>.

16. *Reminder:* LEAs asked to review eRIDE and RIDEmap application roles

The beginning of the school year is a good time to review and adjust the roles that administrators and teachers have within the RIDEmap and eRIDE applications. The LEA Single Sign-On (SSO) administrator is the point of contact for assigning and modifying RIDE application roles.

If you have any questions about RIDE applications and roles, please submit a help-desk ticket, at <https://support.ride.ri.gov>

17. *Reminder:* Several data collections are open, due in the next few months

The following are upcoming data-collection deadlines:

- September 28: [Special Ed Evaluations - Quarter 1 Due](#)
- September 30: [Personnel Data Collection \(PDC\) - Due](#)
- October 3: [At-Home Instructed Students - Due](#)
- October 3: [June Graduating Class Fall Membership - Due](#)
- October 3: [Non-Certified Staff Report - Due](#)

Information about upcoming data collections can be found on the [data collection calendar](#). Weekly collection [webinars](#) provide details regarding upcoming collections, along with a question-and-answer feature.

18. *Reminder:* Rhode Island Alternate Assessment dependent upon Student Enrollment Data

The Alternate Assessment window is quickly approaching, which means that data on eligible students will need to be loaded into that assessment platform. Please submit your most current enrollment data as soon as possible. Remember, enrollment is a nightly collection and you have the ability to continually update these data throughout the year.

19. *Reminder:* SCED Codes Used for PARCC math testing

The following SCED codes will be used to assign algebra and geometry PARCC tests to students.

02052 = Algebra 1

02054 = Algebra 1 – Part 2

02056 = Algebra 2

02072 = Geometry

Please verify that that the SCED codes listed above are assigned to your associated math courses. If these codes are not assigned to the courses above, then enrolled students will be incorrectly assigned a PARCC mathematics test that is associated with the wrong SCED code. You can look for course-specific SCED codes on the [ED.gov website](#) to replace the codes above on non-PARCC math courses.

Educators:

20. *Reminder:* Educators invited to participate in study on evaluation of special educators

RIDE has partnered with Project Validating an Observation for Special Educators (VOISE), a study supporting observations of special educators using Danielson’s Framework for Teaching. The purpose of this study is

to learn more about the effectiveness of this tool for evaluating special education teachers and to provide Rhode Island schools with information that can support administrators in evaluating special educators. This study will take place during the current school year and will be conducted by researchers at Boston University, the Educational Testing Service, and the University of Florida.

For more information on Project VOISE, see:

Project VOISE: <http://sites.bu.edu/voise/>

Project VOISE Information Video: <https://youtu.be/wGlgTfgxmyc>

For questions regarding the study or to share your interest in participating, please email Nathan Jones (Study Director), at ndjones@bu.edu or Carolina Castro, at Carolina.Castro@ride.ri.gov.

Scholarships:

21. *Reminder: LEAs asked to nominate high-school seniors for Presidential Scholar award by October 14 – Action Item*

We are seeking from all Rhode Island high schools nominations of students to be named as 2017 Presidential Scholars. We encourage you to work with your high-school principals and to select one male student and one female student from each high school as your nominees for this award. Here are the criteria, as set forth by the U.S. Department of Education:

We encourage you to nominate students who demonstrate outstanding scholarship but who *might not otherwise be nominated through the current SAT/ACT, Arts, or CTE recognition processes*. All high-school seniors graduating between January and June of 2016 who are U.S. citizens or legal permanent

residents and who attend public, parochial, or independent schools, as well as those who are home-schooled, are eligible. The candidates will go through the application process, and, as in the past, the 2016 U.S. Presidential Scholars will be selected by the Commission on Presidential Scholars and receive the Presidential Scholars Medallion at a ceremony in their honor in Washington, D.C.

It may be helpful to consider the following questions as you contemplate the selection of your nominees:

- What about the student makes him or her stand out as having outstanding scholarship?
- *Were there special challenges or hurdles this student has overcome while still achieving high academic success?*

In addition, it may be useful for you to know that the reviewers will be considering the following categories when evaluating the nominees at the semifinalist and Scholar evaluation levels:

- involvement and Service (in school and community);
- leadership and character;
- writing samples;
- academic achievements; and
- *discretionary points for extraordinary achievement, heavy workload, family responsibilities, or obstacles overcome.*

Each student you nominate should prepare an application that includes:

- his or her resume, including home mailing address;

- a letter of reference from you or a school official that explains how the student stands out as having outstanding scholarship; and
- a brief (approximately 500 to 750 words) essay that responds to this question: “What special challenges or hurdles have you overcome while still achieving high academic success?”

Please also submit this information for each student you nominate:

- Student’s name
- Student’s home mailing address
- Student’s gender
- Student’s personal email address
- High-school name and mailing address
- High-school CEEB code

We remind you that this last point is particularly important to this nomination process, as these nominations will recognize students who would not be considered for this award based solely on their academic achievement.

Either you or your high-school principal(s) will be our contact in this process. We ask either you or your principals (not the nominated students) to submit your nominations to Lauren McCarthy (lauren.mccarthy@ride.ri.gov) by **October 14** .

From nominations we receive, we will select up to 20 nominees from Rhode Island (up to 10 male students, 10 female students). We will notify you when we have submitted nominations to the Presidential Scholars Commission, but you will not hear further from us on the nominations.

The Commission will select finalists early next year, and Scholars will be announced in the spring. Scholars will receive an expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. For more information about the program, see:

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/psp/index.html>

22. *Reminder: RIDE invites high schools, CTE programs to nominate students for Presidential Scholars awards; deadline, September 30 – Action Item*

The U.S. Presidential Scholars Program annually recognizes outstanding students who demonstrate excellence in career and technical education.

RIDE invites you to participate in the nomination process and to recommend for selection as a Presidential Scholar one outstanding CTE student from your center or high school. A committee of knowledgeable educators will review all recommendations and forward the names of five students to Commissioner Wagner, who will nominate up to five Rhode Island CTE students to the U. S. Commission on Presidential Scholars for consideration for national recognition. The Commission on Presidential Scholars will notify all nominees of their selection and invite them to complete the full application.

It may be helpful to consider the following questions as you contemplate the selection of your recommendation:

- What about the student makes him or her stand out as having outstanding scholarship?
- Were there special challenges or hurdles this student has overcome while still achieving high academic success?

In addition, it may be useful for you to know that the national-level reviewers will be considering the following categories when evaluating the nominees at the semifinalist and Scholar evaluation levels:

- Involvement and Service (in school and community);
- Leadership and Character;
- Writing samples;
- Academic achievements; and
- Discretionary points for extraordinary achievement, heavy workload, family responsibilities, or obstacles overcome.

All high-school seniors who are concentrators in a career and technical education (CTE) program of study graduating between *January and June of 2017*, who are U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents, and who attend public, parochial, or independent schools, as well as those who are home-schooled, are eligible. The CTE selection process will evolve over time, but for the 2016-17 class of scholars, candidates who are nominated and choose to apply, and whose applications are complete, will automatically become semifinalists. All 2017 U.S. Presidential Scholars will be selected by the Commission on Presidential Scholars and will receive the Presidential Scholars Medallion at a ceremony in their honor in Washington, D.C.

RIDE will send the required recommendation forms to all high-school principals and CTE directors; the forms must be submitted to Sonya Barbosa, at Sonya.Barbosa@ride.ri.gov, by COB Friday, **September 30**. Address all questions about the CTE Presidential Scholars to Vanessa Cooley, at 222-8438.

From the U.S. Department of Education (USED)

23. USED issued updated College Scorecard to aid in college selection

With more than 50 million students heading into America's public and private schools this fall, our P-12 educational system has never been so large or so diverse, and the need to adequately prepare students to enter and complete college has never been so great. Americans with college degrees are more likely to live healthier lives, be more civically engaged in their communities, pay back their student loans on time, and have well-paying jobs and lower unemployment. It is one of the best investments students can make to help ensure successful futures.

One key to boosting college access is helping students and their families obtain financial aid by making it easier and faster for them to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The form is available online and in Spanish, and allows many students to automatically import their families' tax information. Additionally, with changes being made for this year's application, students and families can now apply for financial aid earlier—starting on **October 1**, as the college application process gets underway, rather than in January—and they can use their families' tax information from two years ago to complete it. For more information on these changes, visit our website at <http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/making-college-more-affordable-more-americans-improving-college-choice>.

However, it is essential that students not only enroll in college—they must also graduate with a high-quality degree. A student who leaves with debt but no degree is three times more likely to default on his or her loans than students who graduated from college. It is essential that students and families have information to help them apply to and enroll in a college or university that will help them achieve their educational goals. With postsecondary -education costs and student debt levels

continuing to rise, the choices that American families make when searching for and selecting a college have never been more important.

To further empower students and families, the USED has released its first annual update of the redesigned [College Scorecard](#), a college search tool that President Obama launched in September 2015 and that nearly 1.5 million users across the nation have accessed since. With more than 4,000 institutions available for students and families to search, the College Scorecard provides answers to critical questions about each institution, like how likely students are to complete their degrees, how much debt students take out, and how much the students typically earn after attending. And the interactive website provides users with the ability to search by program, degree type, location, or by name of institution. All of this information is available at [CollegeScorecard.ed.gov](#).

24. USED issues guidance on using evidence to guide education investments, improve student outcomes

The U.S. Department of Education today released new guidance, [Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments](#), to support evidence-based decision-making by states, districts, schools, educators, and partners. This non-regulatory guidance is intended to help stakeholders make more effective education investments by leveraging rigorous, relevant evidence to improve outcomes for kids under the [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#).

“We have made major progress during this Administration in directing investments in education to evidence-based strategies,” U.S. Secretary of Education John B. King Jr. said. “Relevant, rigorous evidence must be an essential part of a strong framework for decision-making. We hope this guidance will help decision makers as they consider, choose, implement, and refine their strategies to support students.”

The first part of the guidance describes key steps for using evidence as a part of a larger decision-making process, which also includes a focus on identifying local needs, engaging stakeholders, and continuous improvement. The second part of the document provides guidance on the definition of “evidence-based” in ESSA, including recommendations on how to identify the level of evidence for various interventions.

From other organizations

25. Hasbro announces campaign to develop empathy, kindness in students

We at Hasbro, Inc., want to share an easy campaign designed to develop empathy and kindness in our children. This is a national campaign sponsored by the Hasbro Children’s Fund and run by generationOn, the global youth service movement of Points of Light. This campaign encourages schools, teachers, and kids to create their own [Rules of Kindness](#). To participate:

- Go to www.generationOn.org/RulesofKindness to find tools and resources that help guide discussions around empathy as kids create their rules of kindness.
- Put your rules into action with fun and easy service projects and reflect on the impact you made.
- Share your story on our website for a chance to win grants.

This campaign runs through October 17, but don't wait to participate. Make your rules of kindness and share on our website for a chance to win grants and to be featured on our Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram

We're ready to make this the year that kindness rules the world – and we hope you'll join us!

26. Rhode Island Foundation seeks applicants for reading grants; deadline, October 23

The Rhode Island Foundation is seeking applicants for two sets of education grants.

Classroom Spark Grants provide up to \$1,000 for full-time teachers of third-grade students in Rhode Island public schools. Teachers of special subjects like visual arts, music, or physical education are also eligible to apply so long as the proposed project is designed to be used with a cohort of third-grade students. Teachers must make a compelling case about how their proposed project will advance student learning in the classroom and integrates into existing or future units of study.

Eligible expenses include classroom equipment and materials, field trip expenses, software licenses, and other resources that would not otherwise be available. Spark Grants are for one-time expenses and cannot provide ongoing funding to sustain projects. Supplies alone are not eligible, unless the teacher makes a compelling case for how the supplies would engage and stimulate their students in a new and unique way.

For the current school year, teachers may apply for a Classroom Spark Grant only individually; the maximum award for any one project will not exceed \$1,000. Two or more third-grade teachers in the same school may apply for Classroom Spark Grants, but must do so separately.

Spark Reading School Grants up to \$10,000 are new for the current school year. Grounded in the beliefs that imaginative reading and assimilation of context can make learning fun and exciting and that a childhood love of reading holds promise for long-term success, Spark Reading School Grants exist to support teams of teachers or whole grade levels who seek to inspire and reinforce a school's culture of reading. Teacher teams must consist of two or more teachers, and the lead applicant must be a third-grade teacher in a Rhode Island public school, although other educators, such as reading specialists, may also be a part of the applying team.

We welcome a broad range of ideas! We anticipate projects may include launching a guest reader program, initiatives that reinforce literacy through performance or visual arts, creating a new book club for students and parents, investing in audio or print lending book libraries, inviting published authors to visit, supporting "young author" conferences, or hosting afterschool "read-in" nights. We are looking for exceptionally creative ideas that engage a school's entire third grade student population in activities that will inspire and support a lifelong love of reading.

The deadline for [Spark Grants program](#) applications is **October 23**.

27. UnboundEd announces available resources, October standards institute, teachers' blog

As the summer winds down, we at [UnboundEd](#) wanted to share some **back-to-school curriculum and personal learning resources**:

- [Math Content Guides](#): Our guides summarize everything teachers need to know about the major work for each grade, with strategies for supporting students below grade level and examples of lessons and activities for each standard.

- [ELA Fluency Guides](#): These guides help teachers understand how daily fluency work helps all students become stronger readers.
- Free [Curriculum](#): Browse our sequenced, year-long, standards-aligned curricular materials in math and ELA.

Also, mark your calendar for February 13-17, 2017, in Orlando, Florida, for the Winter Standards Institute 2017. We will hold our next [Standards Institute](#) in sunny Orlando and will be offering pathways in ELA, math, and leadership for new and returning attendees. Come with a team from your school, district, or network to study how the standards, content, and systems can improve the performance of struggling students. Registration will open on **October 3**. More information will be posted on the [Standards Institute](#) website soon!

Finally, we are launching a blog series and want to hear from you. We are looking for teachers at all grade levels in ELA and math who would be willing to **share their experiences in the classroom**, particularly as it pertains to meeting state standards and **working with our materials in your classroom**. If you are interested in collaborating with us, please let us know through this [short form](#).

28. Students invited to apply for Prudential community-service awards; deadline, November 8

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards begins its search for Rhode Island's top youth volunteers of 2017.

Now through **November 8**, students in grades 5-12 are invited to apply for Prudential Spirit of Community Awards if they have made meaningful contributions to their communities through volunteer service within the past 12 months. The application is available at <http://spirit.prudential.com> and www.nassp.org/spirit.

This program year marks The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards' 22nd year of honoring youth volunteers. The program, sponsored by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), was created in 1995 to recognize middle-level and high-school students for helping people in need, promoting health and safety, protecting the environment, or volunteering in other ways. The awards are presented annually on the local, state and national level.

Applicants for 2017 awards must complete their online applications by November 8, then submit them for certification to a middle- or high-school principal, Girl Scout council, county 4-H agent, American Red Cross chapter, YMCA or HandsOn Network affiliate. Paper application forms can be requested by calling (877) 525-8491.

Participating schools and local organizations will select Local Honorees in early November and present them with Certificates of Achievement. These Local Honorees also will receive the President's Volunteer Service Award from President Barack Obama if they have contributed the minimum number of volunteer hours to qualify (26 hours for age 10 and younger, 50 hours for ages 11-15 and 100 hours for older students). All Local Honorees are then reviewed by a state-level judging committee, which will name the top two candidates from each state and the District of Columbia – one high school student and one middle level student – as State Honorees on February 7, 2017. These State Honorees will receive \$1,000 awards, engraved silver medallions, and an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., with a parent or guardian for four days of recognition events May 6-9, 2017. Distinguished Finalists at the state level will receive bronze medallions, and runners-up will receive Certificates of Excellence.

In Washington, a distinguished national selection committee will name 10 of the 102 State Honorees as America's top youth volunteers of the

year. These National Honorees will receive additional awards of \$5,000, gold medallions, crystal trophies for their nominating schools or organizations, and \$5,000 grants from The Prudential Foundation for nonprofit charitable organizations of their choice.

29. Lindsay Ann Burke Memorial Fund announces teen-dating violence workshop, design contest

The Lindsay Ann Burke Memorial Fund is holding its all-day Teen Dating Violence Workshop for middle-school and high-school faculty, administrators, mental health workers, guidance staff, school nurse teachers, and resource officers on Friday, **October 28**, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., at Rhode Island College.

Pre-registration is required via email to: annburke@labmf.org. Include your name, school, position, phone number, and your school email address. Visit www.labmf.org/workshops/school for more information.

Also, the Lindsay Ann Burke Memorial Fund is holding a “Bookmark Cover Design Contest” for graphic-arts students. Deadline for entries: **December 1**. Winning design prize: \$200 Theme: Healthy Relationships. Bookmarks will be distributed to middle- and high-school students. Rules and registration forms can be found on our website: www.labmf.org

30. Education Innovation Cluster announces new name (EduvateRI), website

The Rhode Island Education Innovation Cluster has a new name- EduvateRI and a logo and website. Check it out! The website currently holds a **calendar of events**, as we branded September Education Innovation Month. Check out all the cool things happening across the state, and join in the fun!

We are currently building out the website to host many other projects and case studies of the cluster work. Projects include: a group-authored white paper on personalized learning in Rhode Island and a vetting project of new technology products, to name a few.

31. Newport Historical Society sponsors essay contest for high-school students; prize = *Hamilton* tickets

The Newport Historical Society is sponsoring a writing contest for high-school sophomores, entitled Big Ideas for a Changing World. Students are asked to explore the question, “What is happening now in your community, or what could be happening, that has the power to change the future in Rhode Island and potentially the world?”

Rhode Island has been a place of many firsts – innovation runs deep in the Ocean State. It’s the first place in the modern world to incorporate the revolutionary principle of religious freedom in its governing documents. That idea and the related concept of separation of church and state went on to sweep the world. Today these principles are included in the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Just a little more than 100 years later, Rhode Islanders changed the world again – this time by starting the Industrial Revolution in America. What will come next?

For the deadline and submission guidelines visit:

<http://www.newporthistory.org/guided-tours-and-educational-resources/teacher-resources/#essay>

Winners receive tickets to the hit Broadway musical *Hamilton: An American Musical*, including a post-show dinner and transportation to and from New York City. Two student winners from each Rhode Island county will be selected. Teachers who sponsor this competition in their

classes and have an award-winning student essay will be invited to join the trip.

32. Startup Weekend Education scheduled for September 23 – 25

Startup Weekend Education (SWEDU) is coming to Providence for the first time ever! The event is set to take place from Friday, September 23, at 5 p.m. to (begins at 5 PM) to Sunday, September 25, at the Tech Collective, 166 Valley Street. SWEDU is an action-oriented weekend designed to take participants from idea to startup in just 54 hours. The event brings together a diverse group of people (educators, students, entrepreneurs, developers, and designers) passionate about making a positive impact on education.

During the weekend, participants share ideas, form teams, build products and launch education startups. SWEDU begins with open-mic 60-second pitches Friday night that result in the formation of small teams around the best, most viable concepts. Teams spend Saturday and Sunday focusing on customer development, validating their ideas, and building prototypes with the help of experienced coaches. On Sunday, teams demo their products and receive valuable feedback from a panel of expert judges.

This year, the theme for Startup Weekend EDU will focus on “Culturally-Relevant Content,” as part of our deep commitment to educational equity for our students.

Tickets are free. Register here: www.providenceswedu.com.

33. Write Rhode Island fiction competition opens, writing workshops scheduled

September kicks off School One and Goat Hill's inaugural *Write Rhode Island* short fiction competition for Rhode Island students in grades 8-12.

The competition is open to all public, private, parochial, or home-school students throughout the Ocean State. Winners in various categories by grade level will receive prizes, awards, and an opportunity to be published. The students, and teachers, involved will receive recognition for their participation.

South Kingstown Public Library is hosting South County workshops this month with local short story writer Eve Kerrigan; workshops will take place at Peace Dale Public Library on Monday (September 19), September 26, and October 3, at 6 p.m.

North Providence Public Library is hosting workshops starting next week: Thursday (September 22), September 29, and October 6, at 3 p.m., as part of an after-school writing program.

For more information contact Diana Champa, at School One, at dianac@school-one.org or 331-2497.